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BY REV. JAMES RAWSON, A. M.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE ISLAND.

THE Island of Cuba was discovered by Columbus on the 27th of October, 1492, and was by him named Juana, in honor of the son of the king of Spain. The king, however, in 1514, ordered it to be called Fernandina, which was afterward changed for Cuba, the name given to it by its native inhabitants.

All the Spanish historians concur in describing the natives as a most inoffensive race. They lived in villages of two or three hundred houses, each habitation containing several

families, and are said to have possessed an abundance of food, and of the other necessaries of life.

The number of natives, when the island was first discovered, has been variously estimated at from three to six hundred thousand. The tyranny of their conquerors, and the excessive toil to which they were compelled to submit, soon diminished their numbers. Multitudes were compelled to work in the mines, where they soon perished; and still more fled to the mountains, where they destroyed themselves, or died of hunger, to escape from their cruel taskmasters.

One of the chiefs, named Hatuey, who had escaped from Hayti when the Spaniards conquered that island, had warned the Indians of Cuba of the thirst of the Spaniards for gold;

and had advised them to deny having any of the precious metal, if asked for it by the men who, he told them, were about to explore their island. This unfortunate chief was captured by the Spaniards soon after they arrived on the island, and was cruelly condemned to be burned alive. When tied to the stake, he was urged by a priest to become a Christian, and was told that he would then go to heaven; but that if he persisted in his heathenism he would descend to a hell of dreadful punishment. The chief thought awhile, and then asked if all Christians went to heaven; the priest having assured him that they did, he quickly replied, "Then I would rather go to hell, and not meet such cruel people as the Christians are!"

These Indians were of a copper color, with black hair; tall, erect, well proportioned, and with regular features. They adorned their heads with garlands of fish-bones, and with plumes of feathers, and painted their bodies with red earth. Their food consisted of wild animals and birds, and of the fruits and vegetables which grew on the island in great abundance.

Their manner of catching parrots was peculiar:—A boy, ten or twelve years old, climbed a tree, where he sat perched, holding a live parrot in his hand, and his body concealed with leaves. The cries of the captive bird soon attracted numbers to the tree, when the boy easily caught them with a noose.

They had traditions of the creation

of the world; of the deluge; of the ark, and of the raven and dove being sent out of the ark. They believed in the immortality of the soul, and in future rewards and punishments. They have now entirely passed away, and the only remaining monuments of their existence are the piles of human bones found in the caverns of the mountains.

CHAPTER II.

PRESENT CONDITION.

THE present population of the island consists of about one million of persons, of whom four hundred thousand are whites, one hundred and fifty thousand are free colored people, and four hundred and fifty thousand are slaves. The whites are chiefly native Spaniards, of whom, with a few exceptions, are composed the merchants, the army, the priesthood, and all the government officers. The planters and farmers are generally Creoles, or persons born upon the island. The free colored people are by law excluded from all civil offices, but compose a large part of the militia.

In Cuba there are twelve cities, of which Havana is the chief, and Matanzas the next in importance. There are ten towns, and one hundred and eight villages. The principal articles of exportation are sugar, coffee, molasses, wax, honey, tobacco, and copper-ore. Some idea of the importance and extent of its commerce may be formed from the fact, that of the articles just named, which were exported in 1844, the value was about thirty millions of dollars.

The island possesses many large and fine harbors ; some of which are among the best in the world. As travelers from the United States generally sail to Havana, and as its harbor is one of the largest and best, we will there commence our travels

in Cuba. We will suppose that we have bid good by to our friends—that we have been tossed about on the deep blue sea—safely passed the dangerous reefs of Florida—left Key West—and are just entering the harbor of Havana. Standing on the deck, we gaze with wonder on the strange scenery and new objects that lie before us.

The most striking objects that arrest the attention of the stranger on first entering the harbor of Havana are the immense and warlike castle, which, with its extended fortifications, covers every summit of the hills on the opposite side of its bay; and the Moro, a fortification placed at its entrance, and which, raising its high tower, looks like a sentinel at his post, guarding all below. These

fortifications afford the most beautiful views, although it is not easy to obtain permission to visit the interior. However, we can enter in imagination without any permission, and inspect at our leisure this formidable castle. We will take one of the numerous boats waiting near the dock, and proceed to the commencement of a long inclined plane, which after a few turns leads us to the foot of the fortress, already more than a hundred feet above the sea. Here we see the perpendicular walls of the fortification rising on each side more than sixty feet above us, while, at the end of the long, wide passage, a battery of cannon is prepared to sweep the whole approach with its showers of shot. This wide passage seems to have been excavated out of the solid rock,

which forms one of its sides, and against which a narrow flight of stone steps leads to the top of the outer parapet. Here we must step carefully, as on our right hand there is nothing between us and the depth below. We have now reached the summit—let us pause to take breath, and gaze on the scene below. Far down lies a forest of masts, the tops of which are hardly on a level with the base of the fortress; and just beyond is the populous city, with its solid blocks of houses occupying every spot of the level land, and creeping half way up its surrounding hills. Carry your eye southward, and trace the shores of the little bay everywhere covered with beautiful residences; its waters covered with the ships of every nation, riding

securely at anchor. How the moving crowds below are dwindled to pigmies in size ! and that horse with his rider looks but little larger than a child's toy !

But let us leave this spot, and, following the parapet, trace the walls and angles of the fortress. What a city of embattlements lies on our left ! line upon line, and battery over battery, all supporting each other, and the whole on such a grand scale, that it seems as though it would require an army for its garrison. Suddenly, the roll of the drum issues from its inner depths, and the trumpet speeds the message to the next fortress. It is the signal of the setting sun, and from battery, and fort, and war-ship, the evening gun thunders its good-night. Now the sudden tumult is

over, the mingled noise of drum, and trumpet, and cannon, has ceased, and silence again reigns. We have followed the parapet half a mile; and beyond lies the Moro, with its tall tower, and its terrible batteries; while, on our right, another height is covered by batteries that could sweep the whole valley. But see, it is rapidly growing dark! we will carefully retrace our steps, call our boatman, and leave these dreadful preparations for war and bloodshed, fervently hoping that the time may not be far distant in which men "shall learn war no more."

CHAPTER III.

HAVANA.

HAVANA is the principal city in the Island of Cuba, and contains nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants. Its streets are uniform in appearance, crossing each other at right angles, and extending in straight lines from one side of the city to the other. In the principal streets of the city it requires some skill to proceed in safety, such is the constant crowd of ox-carts, long trains of pack-horses loaded with charcoal, poultry, or green fodder, and negro porters carrying huge loads on their heads. There are many beautiful and extensive stores filled with choice dry-goods, jewelry, china, glass-ware, etc. The name of

the merchant never appears on the sign-board; but always some word as a motto, which however has no reference to the goods in the store—as, “virtue,” “beauty,” “a stranger,” etc. The Havana storekeepers are very skillful not only in serving their customers, but in asking a good deal more than they expect to receive. For instance, you ask: “How much for this Panama hat?” “Twelve dollars.” “I will give you six.” “Say eight.” “No, only six.” “It is a very fine one, senor, take it for seven;” and thus he will sell it for a little more than half his first price. The ladies in shopping do not leave their carriages, but have the goods brought to them; and it is only when the seller of goods is of their own sex that they venture into a store.

Under the arcades, near the markets of Havana, are a great number of shops not ten feet square, with a show-case in front, before which the dealer is constantly walking. At night the show-case is carried into his little cabin, which serves him for shop, sleeping room, and kitchen; and where he may be often seen preparing his frugal meal over a pan of burning charcoal. Many of the wealthiest Spanish merchants in Cuba have laid the foundation of their fortunes in the little shops. The substantial manner in which the houses are built will attract the attention of a stranger. The walls of a single story house are seldom less than two feet in thickness; and in the larger buildings the walls appear as if designed for a strong fortification. The value

of real estate is very high in Havana ; and there are not a few houses which rent for ten or twelve thousand dollars. The larger houses are constructed so as to form an open square in the centre. The lower story is occupied by the store-house, reading-room, kitchen, and stable. From the common entrance a wide flight of steps leads to the second story. The chief hall, or parlor, is from forty to fifty feet long, twenty wide, and twenty feet high ; while the windows reaching from the floor to the ceiling, render it cool and pleasant during the hot weather. But the most peculiar thing about the houses in Havana is the strong iron bars with which all the windows are defended, making them look like prisons.

Among the public buildings we may mention the cathedral, ornamented with many paintings of great value, and rich in vessels of gold and silver. The famous Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of America, is buried in this church, where there is a splendid monument erected to his memory. There are also a great number of smaller churches, and several convents. The prison is a large and noble building. It is built in the form of a square, each side being three hundred feet long, and fifty feet high; and in the centre there is a garden watered by a handsome fountain. It can contain five thousand prisoners, and there are seldom less than one thousand confined within its walls. There is also a large and well-arranged military

hospital, and a hospital set apart for persons afflicted with the leprosy. Among the public buildings there is none, however, more interesting than the orphan-house. This is a large and handsome building, designed for the support and education of boys and girls whose parents are dead. It is sustained by a fund, the yearly income of which is about ninety thousand dollars. There are generally about one hundred and fifty boys, and the same number of girls, under instruction. These children are taken at any age; and clothed, fed, and instructed, at the expense of the institution. The boys are put to some business or trade at the age of thirteen years; the girls may remain until they are twenty-one, and, if they have been three years in the institution,

each receives five hundred dollars at her marriage. This excellent institution has already placed fourteen hundred and eleven boys in situations where they can learn useful trades. The state of education is very low in Havana; and still worse in other parts of the Island of Cuba. There are but few schools, and very little effort is made by the government to establish them. As the effect of this neglect of education, crime is very frequent, and it has been found that to a great extent crime and ignorance have been connected. Of eight hundred prisoners charged with serious crimes, it was found that four hundred and ninety-four could neither read nor write. We need scarcely say that sabbath schools are unknown. It is only where religion exercises its

saving effect on the heart, that good men are led to use efforts to establish sabbath schools, and thus obey the command of the blessed Jesus, "Suffer little children to come unto me."



CHAPTER IV.

THE SABBATH.

As the Roman Catholic faith is the only religion permitted by the government in the Island of Cuba, it may be interesting to the young reader to know how the sabbath is observed in Havana, the principal city of the island. And when he compares the religious condition of the people there, with the blessed privileges he enjoys in the house of God and the sabbath school, it may lead him to prize those privileges more highly, and to improve them better.

In Havana the holy sabbath commences with the firing of cannon from the fort and armed vessels, the ringing of merry peals from the numerous

bells of the different convents and churches, and the beating of drums from the barracks and fortifications. The streets at an early hour are alive with people going to the different churches to pay their morning devotions according to the forms of the Church of Rome. On entering the church we shall find priests in splendid robes officiating at an altar glittering in silver and gold, and reflecting a thousand rays from the lights burning around it. Several persons are scattered over the floor of the church, some standing, some seated on benches, or on rugs spread on the floor, and some kneeling. As the day progresses the congregation increases, until about one-eighth of the church is filled. Nearest the railing of the altar, several negroes in common

clothes, some with baskets on their arms, are standing or kneeling, and behind them a group of well-dressed ladies are paying their devotions. Then comes an intermingling of all colors and sexes, some very splendidly dressed, and others in the coarsest and poorest garments. When the service is over, the people retire in groups, or interchange civilities with each other; while others are coming in to attend the next service, as the ceremonies are repeated in all the churches from four to nine o'clock in the morning. In the city, the stores are all open, and the various mechanics are busily at work. The hammer of the shoemaker is heard as on other days, the wheel of the razor-grinder whirls as swiftly as ever, the tailor plies his needle, and the tobacconist

fashions his cigar. The seller of lottery tickets perambulates the streets as usual, horses and carriages crowd the thoroughfares, and nothing appears to distinguish the sabbath from any other day. At the gates of the city carriages are passing, filled with citizens eager to enjoy the fresh air of the country. Toward evening the streets are crowded with persons walking out. The roads at the same time are lined with carriages returning from the country; and at night the crowds flock to listen to the music of the military band, which plays in the Place of Arms, in front of the captain general's mansion. Thus passes the sabbath of Cuba. The morals of the people, generally, are what such a disregard of the sabbath would lead us to expect. Gam-

bling is universal; and although the nominal religion of the island is Roman Catholic, the people, generally, have no confidence in their spiritual teachers, and place very little faith in their doctrines. The Bible is, however, always an acceptable present to them, and is eagerly read. Religious tracts, that contain nothing relating to the subject of slavery, are also received with readiness, and may be extensively distributed.

CHAPTER V.

THE COAST—CLIMATE, ETC.

THE coast of the Island of Cuba is marked in many places with reefs, which run some distance into the sea, and with small islands, called keys, covered with the mangrove-tree. Between these reefs and keys there are many winding and narrow channels, which render the navigation very difficult, and in former times served as a favorite hiding place for the vessels of pirates. The water is as clear as crystal, and abounds with a vast variety of fish, while the reefs and keys are the resort of a great number of water-fowl. Large flocks of black ducks swim around them, which, when frightened by the ap-

proach of a boat, will hide their heads under the water until the boat is close to them, when they fly a short distance, and again conceal their heads. Various species of cranes and curlews perch on the roots of the mangrove-trees, or wade in the shallow waters; while, occasionally, large flocks of flamingoes are seen, looking at a distance, from their long legs and scarlet feathers, like a troop of soldiers. In sailing through the channels, between the reefs and keys, the water is so clear that the bottom can be distinctly seen, and the various kinds of sea-weeds, shells, and fish, present a beautiful sight. The boat seems to be suspended on the clear water, and it is delightful to gaze on the strange garden below. The star-fish, a foot in diameter, with its five rays, lies

motionless on the bottom; sponges, corals, and sea-weeds of different colors, cover the sands, while fish of different forms and hues are darting about, or a great turtle, suddenly aroused from his sleep, paddles swiftly away, filling the water with a cloud of white coral sand. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the colors of the fish found in these channels. They are said to rival in their painted scales, and varied tints, the brilliant hues of the most beautiful birds.

The extremities and the centre of the Island of Cuba are very mountainous. Its rivers are generally short, running to the south and north coasts: some of them, from the mountainous nature of the country, are very rapid, and full of waterfalls, and some are lost in the swamps

on the coast before they reach the sea.

The climate in the winter and spring is very mild and delightful, and, from the small quantity of rain which falls at these seasons of the year, they are commonly called the dry seasons. About the first of November the summer rains cease, and a wind sets in, which, from always blowing in one direction, is called the trade-wind. As the season advances the soil becomes dried to a great depth, the trees drop many of their leaves, and the herbage is parched in the fields, affording but a scanty supply to the cattle which are now fed on the guinea-grass and sugar-canes that remain green all the year. In April and May, when the spring has commenced with us, everything

in Cuba is dry and parched. The palm-trees wear their dark green winter dress, the woods present no new leaves, and the fields are not covered with the lively green of the young grass. June, however, approaches, with its heavy showers and hot sunshine; and vegetation starts forth with a rapidity unknown to us. The spears of the palm-trees are rapidly unfolded into long fringed leaflets; the plantain unrolls its light green scrolls, and exposes its broad tender leaves to the wind; the orange and lemon-trees put forth luxuriant shoots, and the parched fields are covered with a carpet of bright green.

The rainy season is ushered in by violent storms. For several days the whole canopy of the heavens is covered by heavy clouds. About two

o'clock in the afternoon the clouds gather into one great black mass, and the wind gradually falls until a deep calm succeeds, and every leaf becomes motionless. And now, the sudden blast bursts through the still air, the forest trees groan under its power, and the tender plants are thrown to the earth. The long, pliant leaves of the tall palm flutter in the rushing wind; and the broad, tender leaves of the plantain are lashed into shreds; but the whole scene is soon hid by the torrents of rain. The air is filled with a mass of rushing waters; and the streams and flashes of the lightning seem to mingle with the constant roar of the thunder. In less than an hour the storm passes away; but fresh clouds constantly arise, and heavy showers fall in different places.

At night a refreshing coolness fills the air, and millions of fire-flies illuminate the forest with their little sparkling lamps. The scorpion now leaves his snug winter quarters in the palm-thatched roof, and crawls about the cottage of the laborer, sometimes finding its way into his bed, his shoes, and his clothes. A vast variety of beautiful butterflies are on the wing. Flowers of every hue display their colors, and the various forest and fruit trees display their blossoms, soon to be followed by the rich and luscious fruit.

CHAPTER VI.

RIDE IN THE INTERIOR.

To the stranger from a northern climate, a ride through any part of the Island of Cuba is full of interest. The trees, the fruits, the flowers, the birds, the insects, the houses, the people—all proclaim that this is the land of the sun, a strange and foreign shore. As we leave Havana, the principal city, and pass onward into the interior of the island, everything is strange and new. We pass well-stocked farms, surrounded by hedges of aloes; their sharp-pointed and long stiff leaves closely interlaced form a very secure fence. While from the centre of these clustered spears, tall, straight flowering stems, twenty feet

high, raise their twisted branches and cup-like blossoms. Then comes the square-trimmed lime hedge, with its small clusters of white flowers yielding their perfume to the air, equally secure against the intrusion of man or beast; and next, long lines of uncemented stone fences, built of the jagged honeycomb coral rock that abounds throughout the country. These fences often inclose whole acres of rich and fragrant pine-apples, each sustained by a short stalk above the circle of thorny leaves composing the plant. Some are still small, and covered with the small blue flowers that blossom all over the plant; while others are large, ripe, and of a golden hue.

Now we pass by fields of plantains growing thickly together, bearing above their slender trunks heavy

bunches of green fruit; their long, tender, fan-like leaves, torn in shreds by the wind. Surrounding us, on every side, are curious plants or trees, springing from the rich soil, and arresting our attention by their rich foliage, or beautiful and fragrant flowers. But we are now beyond the immediate neighborhood of the city, and the gardens and farms are succeeded by extensive coffee and sugar estates. Here the tall palm, queen of the forest, meets the eye on every side. Sometimes standing alone, and scattered over fields of sugar-cane, with their tall straight trunks, and their tufted crowns of long, branch-like, fringed leaves, waving and trembling in every breeze. Now, in long avenues of beautiful columns, their leaves reaching across, and intermingling,

form one continued arch. As we proceed, we pass coffee plantations, with their low and evenly pruned shrubs closely planted, and divided into large squares by mangoe, palm, or orange trees. The whole country around us looks like an immense garden, and as we gaze over the wide expanse, and survey the beauties of hill and dale, woodland and field, it would seem as though none but holy beings could dwell in a scene so beautiful. But, alas! the beautiful words of Bishop Heber may be applied to this highly gifted spot:—

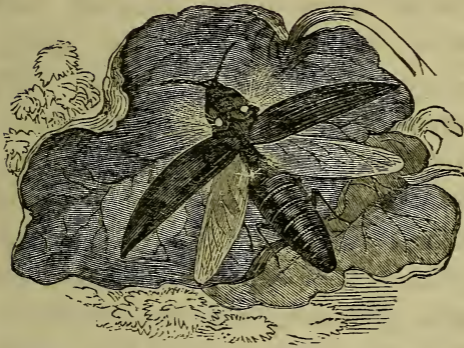
“ What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o’er Cuba’s isle ;
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile ;
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown ;
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.”

As night approaches, the landscape is even more beautiful in the soft light of declining day than under the bright rays of the sun. The wind subsides to a perfect calm, and an air of peaceful quiet hangs over the whole land. Even the fringed leaves of the palms are motionless, and droop from the long and gracefully arched stems. About us, all surrounding objects are mellowed by the increasing shades, but in the distance all becomes indistinct. Star after star now rapidly appears—for here no twilight makes the day gradually darken into night—and the whole sky is soon blazing with its thousand lamps. Immediately after the sun disappears the air is filled with fire-flies, darting in all directions like so many little lamps. The trees sparkle and glow

with ten thousand gems in constant motion, emitting a bright light, while on every side multitudes of them sweep along like sheets of light, illuminating the surrounding air. The country ladies catch these insects and put them in the flounces of their dresses when about to attend their dancing parties. The motion excites the insects to give out their light, when they resemble the sparkling brilliancy of large diamonds. They are a species of beetle, about an inch long, and a quarter of an inch broad. The chief bright spot is on the under part of their bodies, and is a quarter of an inch long, and the eighth of an inch wide; this, when they fly, resembles a burning taper, and is exceedingly brilliant.

As coffee and sugar are the principal articles raised on the island, we will

accompany the young reader in a visit to the plantations where they are produced, and see the mode in which they are prepared for the market.



CHAPTER VII.

THE COFFEE PLANTATION.

IMAGINE more than three hundred acres of land planted in regular squares, with evenly pruned shrubs; each square containing about eight acres, crossed by broad alleys of palms, orange-trees, mangoes, and other beautiful trees; the spaces between which are planted with lemon - trees, pomegranates, jessamines, lilies, and various other fragrant flowers of rich and beautiful colors; while a double strip of guinea-grass, or of pineapple plants, skirt the sides, presenting a pretty contrast to the smooth red soil in the centre, which is kept free from all verdure. When these various trees and plants

are in flower nothing can exceed the beauty of the scene. The flower of the coffee-tree is white, and so abundant, that the fields look as if covered with snow. The rose-apple bears a blossom that looks like a beautiful fringe; while the pomegranate and Mexican rose present clusters of blossoms of a rich red color. The lirio, one of the most singular plants of the warm regions, bears trumpet-shaped flowers of yellow and red, and bursting in bunches from the blunt ends of their leafless branches. The young pineapples are covered with blue flowers, growing out of the centres of the little squares with which they are marked; while the white and fragrant tube-roses, the double jessamines, the gaudy yellow flag, the scarlet flowers of the pinon,

and a multitude of beautiful blossoms peculiar to warm climates, fill the air with their perfume, and delight the eye with their rich colors and graceful forms.

As the season advances, many of the flowers give place to the ripened fruit; the golden orange, the yellow mango, the lime, the lemon, the luscious caimito, and sugared zapote, the mellow alligator pear, the custard-apple, and the rose-apple, hang on the trees in rich abundance, and furnish a delightful refreshment in this sultry climate.

Unlike the gardens of our northern homes, this beautiful appearance is not confined to a short period only. The coffee-tree has successive crops of blossoms five or six times in the winter and spring; and, on the orange-

tree, the blossom and the ripe fruit, and the young green fruit, are often seen at the same time ; while several of the shrubs and plants bloom nearly all the year.

The coffee-tree was originally brought from Ethiopia to Persia, and from thence to the West Indies. In 1690, the Dutch governor of Batavia, having raised the plant from seeds procured in Arabia, sent one plant to Amsterdam in Holland. From this plant others were raised, and some of them were sent to the West Indies ; from these were derived the extensive plantations of this tree now cultivated in the Island of Cuba, and in the other islands and countries of the tropics.

If left to nature, the coffee-tree attains a height of twelve or eighteen

feet, and gives off branches which are knotted at every joint, and, like the trunk, are covered with a gray-colored bark. The blossoms are white, and form thick circular clusters around the branches. The berries at first are green; but as they increase in size, and become ripe, they turn white, then yellow, and finally bright red, closely resembling the cherry in size and appearance. The trees are loaded with them, in circles around each joint of the branches; as many as ninety of these cherries have been counted upon a single branch two feet long. Each cherry contains two coffee berries, with their flat sides laid together, and surrounded by a soft sweet pulp.

The coffee nursery is made by clearing away the undergrowth of a

wood, leaving the high trees to protect the young plants by their shade. The coffee cherries are here sown, and the young plants, when from one to four years old, are transplanted, and placed six feet apart, in squares, each square containing ten thousand trees. They are then cut off about two inches from the ground, and the new shoot which springs up forms the future tree, and bears fruit the third year. They are then kept pruned to the height of five feet, and all the dead branches are carefully trimmed away every year. Among the young coffee-trees, rows of plantains are formed eighteen feet apart; and corn is freely sown in all the vacant spaces.

The coffee cherries ripen from August to December, and are all gathered

singly by the hand ; and as three or four different crops are often ripening at the same time on each tree, as many separate pickings are required. The cherries are brought in baskets from the fields, and during the day are exposed to the heat of the sun. At night they are raked together in heaps, and covered with straw to protect them from the heavy dews ; after three weeks they become quite dried, and are then fit for the mill. The coffee-mill consists of a large round wooden trough, about two feet deep. Within this there is a heavy, solid, wooden wheel, which is made to revolve by a mule or an ox. The dried coffee cherries are poured into the space between the wheel and the sides of the trough, and are cleansed by being forcibly pressed and rubbed

against each other. They are then put into a fanning-mill, which separates the husk from the berries, and divides the larger from the smaller grains. It is now ready for market, and is packed in bags made of Manilla hemp, as nothing else is strong enough to resist the pressure caused by the swelling of the coffee from the moisture of the air.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUGAR PLANTATION.

IN strong contrast to the beautiful appearance of a coffee plantation, the sugar estate spreads out its solitary but extensive field of cane, with nothing to vary the prospect but the tall and slender palm-tree scattered here and there through its whole extent. Three kinds of sugar-cane are planted. The *Otaheite*, which is yellow, and very rich in sugar; the *ribbon-cane*, striped with purple bands; and the *crystalline*, having long joints, and of a bluish color. The cane is raised from slips, which are planted in rows, and require to be kept clear from weeds. When the cane has become sufficiently ripe for cutting,

the sugar plantation wears an aspect of great activity. The greater part of the slaves are employed in cutting the cane. This is done by a short sword-like cleaver, one stroke cutting the cane close to the ground, and another removing the unripe tops, which are thrown into one long heap, and the canes into another. The tops are left for the cattle to feed on, and the canes are removed to the mill. They are placed at the mill on a revolving platform, which conveys them to the rollers, through which they pass, and which squeezes from them all the juice. The crushed stalks fall on another revolving platform, and are carried off to a spot where a number of slaves are waiting to convey them into the yard. They are there exposed to the sun until

quite dry, when they are packed under large sheds, and used as fuel for boiling the cane juice.

The juice flows from the rollers into a large reservoir, in which it is gently heated, and where it deposits the dirt and pieces of cane that have escaped with it from the rollers. From this it is drawn off into a large caldron, where it undergoes a rapid boiling, and has a little lime added to it to correct its acidity. When reduced to a certain degree, it is dipped out by ladles into another caldron, where it is suffered to boil until it reaches a point at which, by becoming cool, it will form small grains or crystals. It is now removed by large ladles into a long wooden trough, and stirred until it is cold. The mass now consists of grains of sugar and the mo-

lasses. When it is designed to make the sugar called muscovado, the mass is conveyed into large wooden cisterns, and the molasses is drained away.

To make the kind of sugar called white Havana, the mass is placed in earthen or tin pans, each holding about eighty pounds, and the molasses is drained off. Clay, made into a soft paste with water, is now spread over the sugar about three inches thick. The water, slowly separating from the clay, passes through the brown sugar below, and washes off the molasses, leaving the sugar clean and white.

During the dry season the sugar planter is in constant dread of his fields taking fire, and his whole crop, and perhaps his buildings, being thus destroyed in a few hours.

As soon as the fire is discovered the large bell of the estate is rapidly tolled, and the neighboring estates send forth their troops of slaves at the summons, who hasten to the spot. Lanes are cut through the field, and counter-fires lighted; but in some cases the lane is cut too close to the fire, and the whole field is destroyed. The roaring of the flames, the loud cracking of the burning cane, the volumes of smoke that sweep along the ground, the hundreds of half-naked slaves, with their sword-like cleavers hewing down the cane, and the white men on horseback, galloping about and shouting their orders, all combine to make it a striking and awful scene.

CHAPTER IX.

P E A S A N T R Y .

As we have now seen the coffee and the sugar planter, we will, if the young reader please, pay a visit to the cottage of the hardy peasant. In the centre of an open spot, generally bare of high trees, a small hut may be seen, often formed entirely of the palm-tree. Its trunk, split into poles, and tied firmly together by strips of bark, forms the frame and rafters. The foot-stalk, or part of the leaf that encircles the trunk, is spread out, and sewed to the sides of the hut, and being about five feet long and three wide, and secure against the rain, forms an excellent protection against the weather. The roof is next thatched with

the long stems of the palm-leaf, cut into pieces three feet long, and tied to the rafters, forming a covering about a foot thick, through which neither heat nor wet can penetrate. The door and window-shutter alone are of planks, the floor being of clay or mud. The furniture within is as simple and scanty as the house itself. A cot, a bench, a table, a shelf, and sometimes a chest, comprise the whole; two or three plates, and a few cups for coffee, compose his breakfast and dinner sets.

Near the hut, the peasant's horse is tied to a tree; and perhaps a small house may stand close by for his fowls, which, however, more frequently roost upon the trees, or in his own hut. In the background is his patch of plantains, on which he depends all

the year round for his daily bread. People this spot with half a dozen naked children, whose skins seem never to have been acquainted with soap and water; a slovenly dressed woman; and a man in pantaloons and shirt, with a sword lashed to his side, and spurs to his cow-hide shoes, and you have a faithful picture of a Cuba peasant, with his family and home. The peasant of Cuba has a warm affection for his horse. He never travels in any other way than on horseback: indeed a foot-traveler is unknown in the island. The very beggars go on horseback; and sometimes two may be seen riding on the same horse, and calling at some hospitable mansion, where all their wants are supplied.

With all this absence of what we

are accustomed to call the comforts of life, such is the mildness of the climate, and so abundant the supply of native fruits, that the situation of the peasant is more agreeable than we should suppose. The hut, shaded by groups of cocoa-nut trees, and surrounded by oranges, lemons, and plantains, has a pretty appearance, and a very little labor supplies all the wants of the family. If a stranger wishes a few cocoa-nuts, one of the little boys of the peasant's family will climb up the tall trunk of one of the trees, and, holding on to the long branch-like leaves, crawl into the tufted crown of the tree, and, pushing off the fruit with his feet, call out to the stranger to take care of his head. The little fellow seems quite fearless, and, winding his light body between the leaves,

slides down the slippery trunk. With his knife he cuts through the rind and shell of the nut, which, when green, is not hard, and, politely presenting it, is amply rewarded by a small gift.



CHAPTER X.

BIRDS, ETC.

THE birds of Cuba are very numerous, and some of them are very beautiful; but with the exception of the mocking-bird, and one or two others, they do not sing. The green and large red parrot; the flamingo, with its rich scarlet plumes; the ivory-billed woodpecker, and the humming birds, are all very beautiful. One of the most remarkable birds is the judeo, about the size and shape of a crow, with black plumage, and a great hooked bill as large as its whole head. They fly in flocks, and when perched place sentinels on the watch, who proclaim the approach of a person by screaming "*hudeo ! hudeo !*"

The arriero is one of the most graceful birds on the island. It is about the size of a pigeon, of a brown color, and with a long tail. It runs along the branches of the trees, very much like a squirrel.

The doti is a social, lively little bird. It is about the size of a black-bird, is a great thief, and is seen in large flocks about the stables and sugar houses.

About February, when the sour oranges are quite ripe, large flocks of parrots settle on the trees, and devour the oranges; and are frequently shot for eating, or caught for sale.

The quadrupeds of Cuba are very few in number. A few deer are found in the swamps. Wild dogs

and wild cats are very numerous. They were originally brought to the island by the French; and were left behind when their masters were suddenly driven away. Being compelled to seek for their own living, they have become wild, and are very destructive to the poultry. With the exception of the scorpion, and a large kind of spider, there are no venomous reptiles or insects in Cuba. The snakes are all harmless. Alligators are found only in some parts of the rivers near the sea; and not a single dangerous animal roams through its forests.

As many of our young readers have heard of the celebrated bloodhounds of Cuba, it may be interesting to them to know something concerning them.

They are about the size of a mastiff, with a longer nose and legs. They are very fierce and dangerous, but owe their habits of tracing persons to education. They are generally kept for the purpose of hunting runaway slaves. When nearly grown, the dog is chained up, and a negro is sent to worry him, by whipping and other means. After a long training, and when the dog has acquired a perfect hatred of his tormentor, the negro whips him severely, and then runs to a great distance, and climbs a tree. The dog is now let loose, and follows his track, nor will he leave the tree until he is taken away, or the negro descends.

In addition to the great number of fruit-trees, there are many forest-

trees which are very valuable and curious.

The palm is the most valuable tree on the island—and one of the most beautiful of the whole world. It not only furnishes by its flowers a fruitful source of honey to the bee, and by its seeds a favorite food to animals, but its leaves and trunk furnish all the materials necessary for building the cottage of the laborer. It grows in all soils, attains a height of sixty or seventy feet, while the trunk, erect, and quite smooth, is but one or two feet thick. It ends in a green top, six feet long, composed of footstalks of the leaves, and inclosing the young leaves, which when boiled are more delicate than the garden cabbage. Each tree has

twenty leaves, and each leaf is about fourteen feet long, while from the centre a single unopened leaf, like a tall spear, shoots up ten feet high.

The granadillo grows about twelve feet high, and from its hardness and beautiful color is selected for walking canes. The majagua is a fine tree, growing to the height of forty feet, and bearing red flowers. Its bark is very strong, and, when stripped into ribbons, is twisted into ropes for wells and ox-carts. Among the many curious trees may be mentioned the sandbox-tree, covered to its smallest branches with strong thorns, and bearing a pod so shaped as to make it a perfect sandbox; the trumpet-tree, with a hollow trunk; the Iaguey macho, growing on the

tops of the highest trees, and sending down a small, long string, which takes root in the ground; and the mangrove, which sends down roots from every branch, until it is multiplied into a forest, growing into the sea.

THE END.

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